

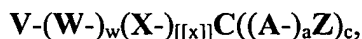
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel without prejudice claims 11, 13, 26-30, and 44; and amend claims 4, 8, 10, 12, 14, 25, 35, 37, 41, 43, and 50. The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently amended) A compound having a formula selected from

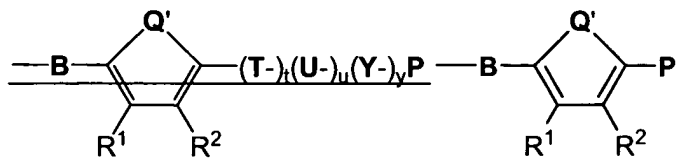


wherein:

V is an enzymatically removable specifier which ~~can be removed or transformed by a chemical, photochemical, physical, biological, or enzymatic activation,~~ is optionally removable after ~~prior~~ binding to a receptor, or

taken together, V-B is an oxidized form of B, wherein B is part of C, W or X;

each of W and X independently is a single release 1,(4+2n) electronic cascade spacer and has the formula:



wherein

Q' is ~~selected from~~ $R^5C=CR^6$, S, O, NR^5 , $R^5C=N$, and $N=CR^5$;

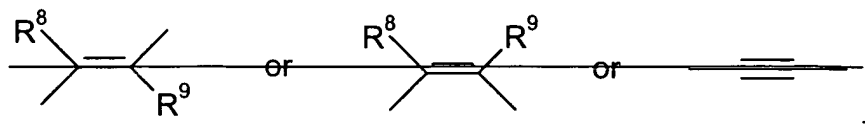
B is selected from NR^7 , O, and S;

P is $C(R^3)(R^4)Q$;

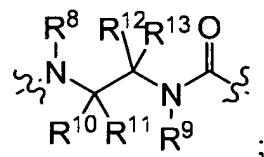
Q ~~has no meaning or~~ is $-O-CO-$;

~~t, u, and v are independently an integer of 0 to 5; and~~

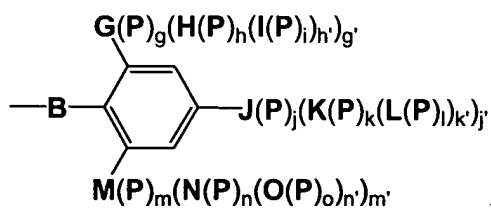
~~T, U, and Y independently are~~



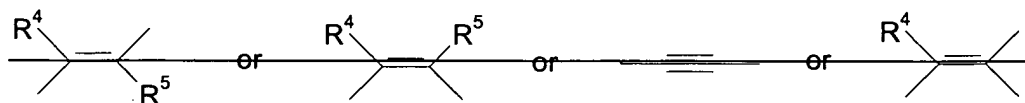
A is an ω -amino aminocarbonyl cyclization elimination spacer having the formula:



each of **C**, **D**, **E**, and **F** independently is a self-eliminating multiple release spacer or spacer system ~~that upon activation can maximally release c, d, e, and f leaving groups, respectively,~~ and has the formula:



wherein



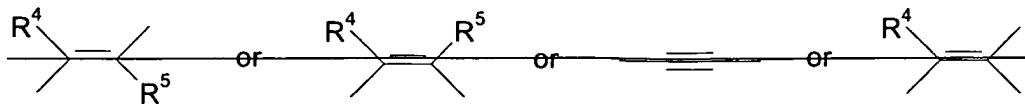
B is selected from NR^1 , O, and S;

P is $C(R^2)(R^3)Q-(W-)_w(X-)_x$; wherein

Q ~~has no meaning or~~ is $-O-CO-$;

W and **X** are as defined above;

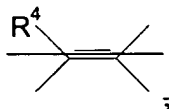
~~G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, and O~~ independently are:



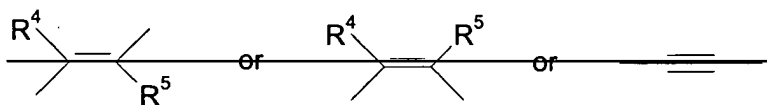
or

~~G, J, and M~~ independently are selected from the group of ~~P~~, and g, h, i, h', g', j, k, l, k', j', m, n, o, m', and n' all equal 0; or

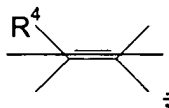
G and M are hydrogen, g, h, i, h', g', m, n, o, n', and m' all equal 0, ~~with the~~
proviso that if two of ~~G, J, and M~~ are hydrogen, the remaining group must be



or be



and at the same time be conjugated to



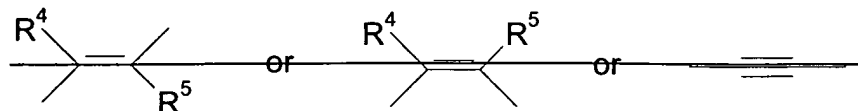
~~g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, h', g', k', j', n', m'~~ are independently 0, 1, or 2 with the
provisos that

if ~~G~~ = hydrogen or ~~P~~, ~~g, h, i, h', and g'~~ all equal 0;

if ~~J~~ = hydrogen or ~~P~~, ~~j, k, l, k', and j'~~ all equal 0;

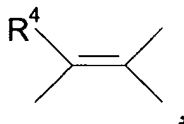
if ~~M~~ = hydrogen or ~~P~~, ~~m, n, o, n', and m'~~ all equal 0;

if ~~G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, or O~~ is



then $g + g' = 1, h + h' = 1, i = 1, j + j' = 1, k + k' = 1, l = 1, m + m' = 1, n + n' = 1,$
or $o = 1$, respectively;

J is if ~~G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, or O~~ is



and $j = 2$ and $j' = 0$ then $g + g' = 2, h + h' = 2, i = 2, j + j' = 2, k + k' = 2, l = 2, m +$
 $m' = 2, n + n' = 2$, or $o = 1$, respectively;

if $g' = 0$ and ~~G~~ is not hydrogen or ~~P~~, then h, h' , and i equal 0 and $g > 0$;

if $g = 0$ and ~~G~~ is not hydrogen or ~~P~~, then $g' > 0$;

if $g' > 0$ and $h' = 0$, then $i = 0$ and $h > 0$;

if $g' > 0$ and $h = 0$, then $h' > 0$ and $i > 0$;

if $j' = 0$ and ~~J~~ is not hydrogen or ~~P~~, then k, k' , and l equal 0 and $j > 0$;

if $j = 0$ and ~~J~~ is not hydrogen or ~~P~~, then $j' > 0$;

if $j' > 0$ and $k' = 0$, then $l = 0$ and $k > 0$;

if $j' > 0$ and $k = 0$, then $k' > 0$ and $l > 0$;

if $m' = 0$ and ~~M~~ is not hydrogen or ~~P~~, then n, n' , and o equal 0 and $m > 0$;

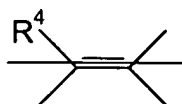
if $m = 0$ and ~~M~~ is not hydrogen or ~~P~~, then $m' > 0$;

if $m' > 0$ and $n' = 0$, then $o = 0$ and $n > 0$;

if $m' > 0$ and $n = 0$, then $n' > 0$ and $o > 0$;

with the proviso that

if the compound contains only C and no D, no E, and no F are present, and B = NR¹, and G and M are H, and g, h, i, h', g', k, l, k', l', m, n, o, n', and m' are 0, and J =



, and j = 2, and Q = -O-CO-, and w and x are 0, and R¹, R², and R³, and R⁴ are H, then at least one of the Z groups is not connected to Q via an aliphatic amino group;

wherein R¹, R², R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁶, and R⁷, R⁸, and R⁹ independently are selected from H, a C₁₋₆ alkyl group, a C₃₋₂₀ heterocyclyl group, a C₅₋₂₀ aryl group, a C₁₋₆ alkoxy group, hydroxy (OH), amino (NH₂), mono-substituted amino (NR_xH), di-substituted amino (NR_x¹R_x²), nitro (NO₂), halogen, CF₃, CN, CONH₂, SO₂Me, CONHMe, a cyclic C₁₋₅ alkylamino group, imidazolyl, a C₁₋₆ alkylpiperazinyl group, morpholino, thiol (SH), thioether (SR_x), tetrazole, carboxy (COOH), carboxylate (COOR_x), sulphony (S(=O)₂OH), sulphonate (S(=O)₂OR_x), sulphonyl (S(=O)₂R_x), sulphixy (S(=O)OH), sulphinate (S(=O)OR_x), sulphinyl (S(=O)R_x), phosphonooxy (OP(=O)(OH)₂), and phosphate (OP(=O)(OR_x)₂), wherein R_x, R_x¹ and R_x² are independently selected from a C₁₋₆ alkyl group, a C₃₋₂₀ heterocyclyl group and a C₅₋₂₀ aryl group, ~~or two or more of the substituents R¹, R², R³, R⁴, R⁵, R⁶, R⁷, R⁸, and R⁹ optionally are connected to one another to form one or more aliphatic or aromatic cyclic structures;~~

R⁸ and R⁹ independently are selected from H and C₁₋₆ alkyl, said alkyl being optionally substituted with one or more of the following groups: hydroxy (OH), ether (OR_x), amino (NH₂), mono-substituted amino (NR_xH), di-substituted amino (NR_x¹R_x²), nitro (NO₂), halogen, CF₃, CN, CONH₂, SO₂Me, CONHMe, cyclic C₁₋₅ alkylamino, imidazolyl, C₁₋₆ alkylpiperazinyl, morpholino, thiol (SH), thioether (SR_x), tetrazole, carboxy (COOH), carboxylate (COOR_x), sulphony (S(=O)₂OH), sulphonate (S(=O)₂OR_x), sulphonyl (S(=O)₂R_x), sulphixy (S(=O)OH), sulphinate (S(=O)OR_x), sulphinyl (S(=O)R_x), phosphonooxy (OP(=O)(OH)₂), and phosphate (OP(=O)(OR_x)₂), where R_x, R_x¹ and R_x²

independently are selected from a C₁₋₆ alkyl group, a C₃₋₂₀ heterocyclyl group and a C₅₋₂₀ aryl group; and

R¹⁰, R¹¹, R¹², and R¹³ independently are selected from, C₁₋₆ alkyl, C₃₋₂₀ heterocyclyl, C₅₋₂₀ aryl, C₁₋₆ alkoxy, hydroxy (OH), amino (NH₂), mono-substituted amino (NR_xH), di-substituted amino (NR_x¹R_x²), nitro (NO₂), halogen, CF₃, CN, CONH₂, SO₂Me, CONHMe, cyclic C₁₋₅ alkylamino, imidazolyl, C₁₋₆ alkylpiperazinyl, morpholino, thiol (SH), thioether (SR_x), tetrazole, carboxy (COOH), carboxylate (COOR_x), sulphony (S(=O)₂OH), sulphonate (S(=O)₂OR_x), sulphonyl (S(=O)₂R_x), sulphoxy (S(=O)OH), sulphinate (S(=O)OR_x), sulphinyl (S(=O)R_x), phosphonooxy (OP(=O)(OH)₂), and phosphate (OP(=O)(OR_x)₂), wherein R_x, R_x¹ and R_x² independently are selected from a C₁₋₆ alkyl group, a C₃₋₂₀ heterocyclyl group and a C₅₋₂₀ aryl group; or

alternatively, two or more of R⁸, R⁹, R¹⁰, R¹¹, R¹², and R¹³ are connected to one another to form one or more aliphatic or aromatic cyclic structures;

each Z is independently a therapeutic or diagnostic moiety;

a is 0 or 1;

c, d, e, and f are independently an integer from 2 (included) to 24 (included);

w and x are independently an integer from 0 (included) to 5 (included); and

n is an integer of 0 (included) to 10 (included).

5-6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously presented) The compound according to claim 4, wherein the Z groups are linked to the self-eliminating multiple release spacer or spacer system via an O, S, or aromatic N of the Z group.

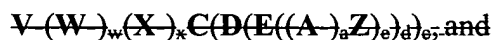
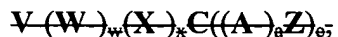
8. (Currently amended; withdrawn) The compound according to claim 4, wherein the ~~leaving groups~~ Z groups are linked to the self-eliminating multiple release spacer or spacer system via an aliphatic N and wherein at least one multiple release spacer or spacer system of

either generation **C**, **D** (if present), **E** (if present), or **F** (if present) is a phenol- or thiophenol-based multiple release spacer or spacer system, meaning that

- i) **B** = O or S for at least one multiple release spacer in said generation, or
- ii) when **B** = N for all multiple release spacers in said generation, at least one single release spacer is connected to at least two branches of at least one multiple release spacer in said generation, and **B** = O or S for at least two of said single release spacers.

9. (Withdrawn) The compound according to claim 8, wherein **B** = O or S for all multiple release spacers or spacer systems in said generation.

10. (Currently amended; withdrawn) The compound according to claim 8, wherein the phenol- or thiophenol-based multiple release spacers are connected to either **A** or **Z** or **S**, wherein **S** has no meaning or is H, OH, or a reactive moiety that allows for coupling the multiple release spacer system to leaving groups **Z** to afford compounds independently selected from:

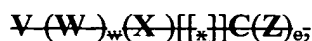


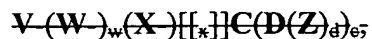
11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently amended; withdrawn) The compound according to claim 4, wherein group **A** is an ω -amino aminocarbonyl cyclization spacer present, and **Z** is a moiety coupled via its hydroxyl group to **A**.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently amended) The**A** compound of claim 4 having a formula selected from

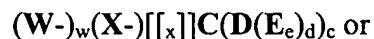
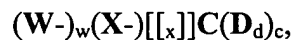
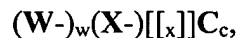




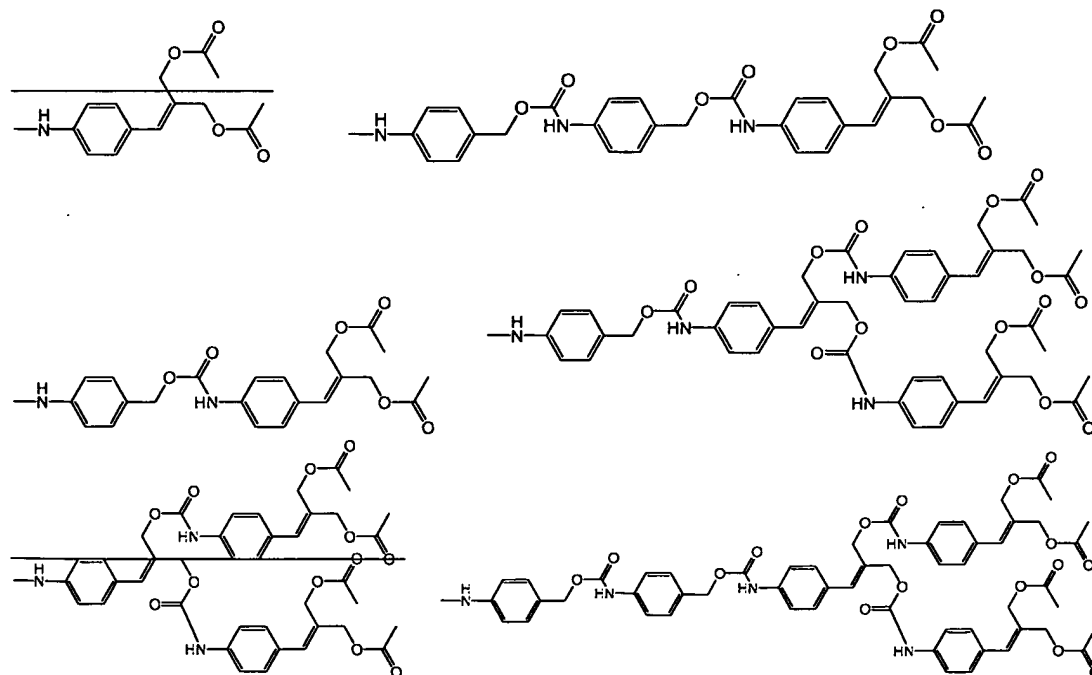
wherein:

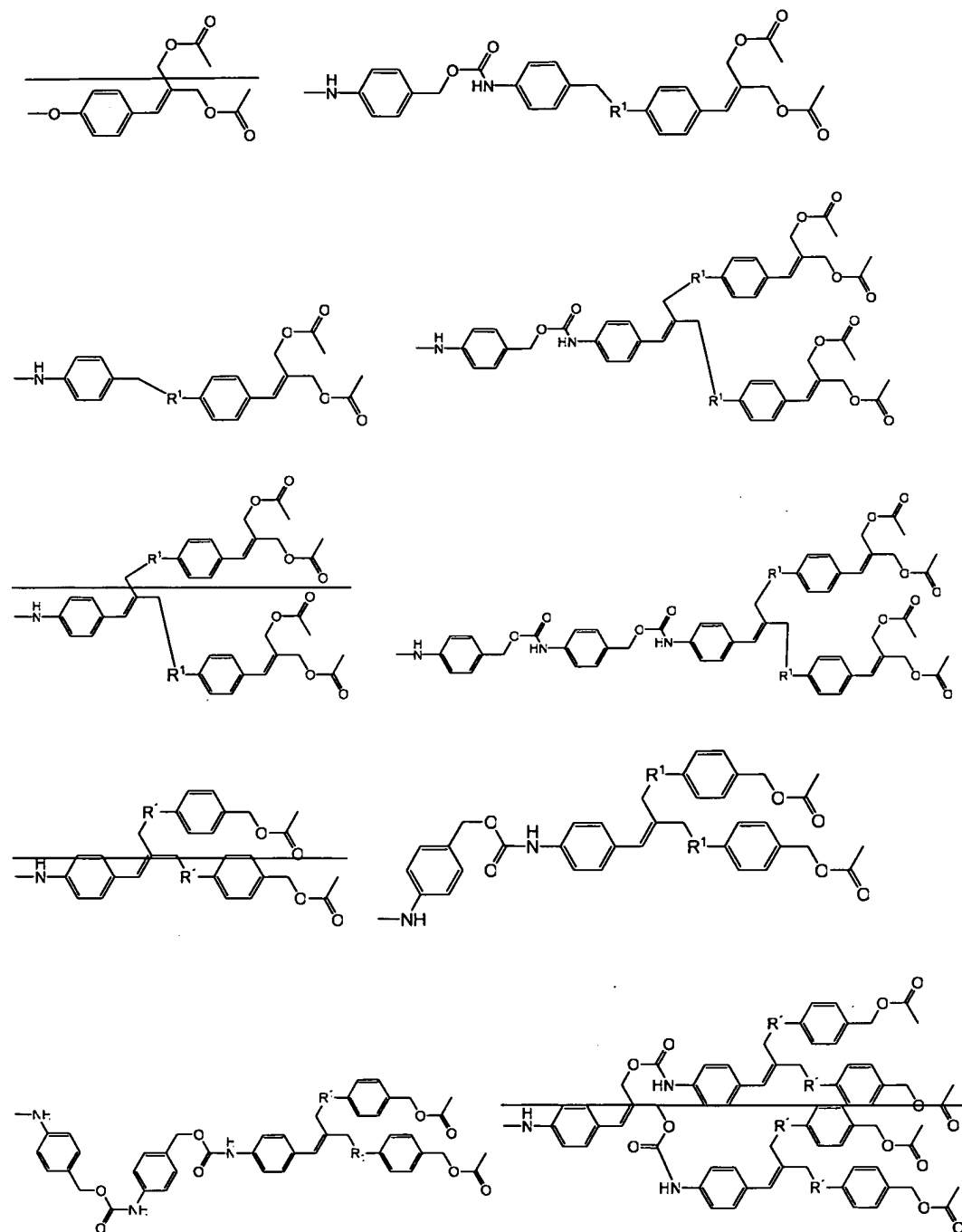
~~V is a specifier which can be removed or transformed by a chemical, photochemical, physical, biological, or enzymatic activation, optionally after prior binding to a receptor, or~~

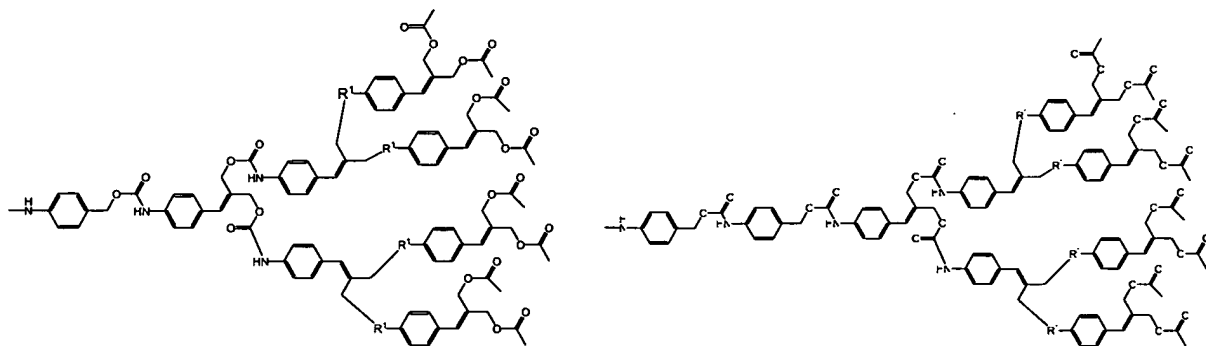
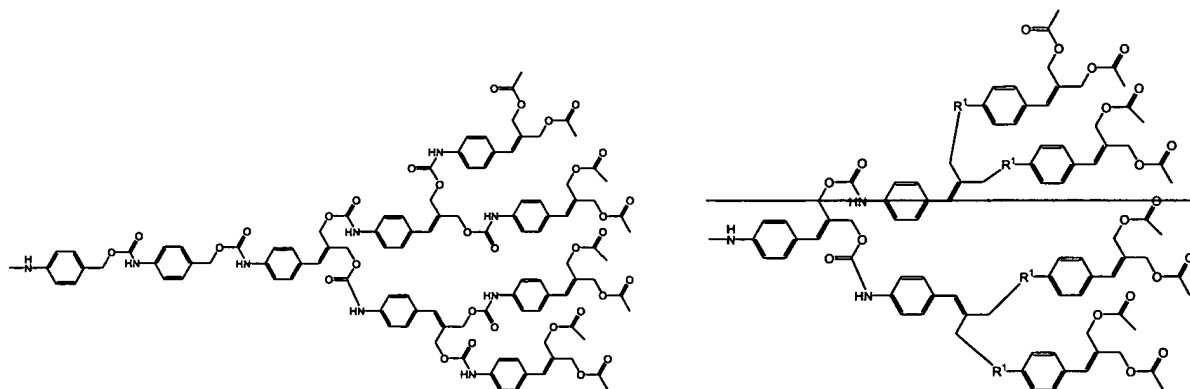
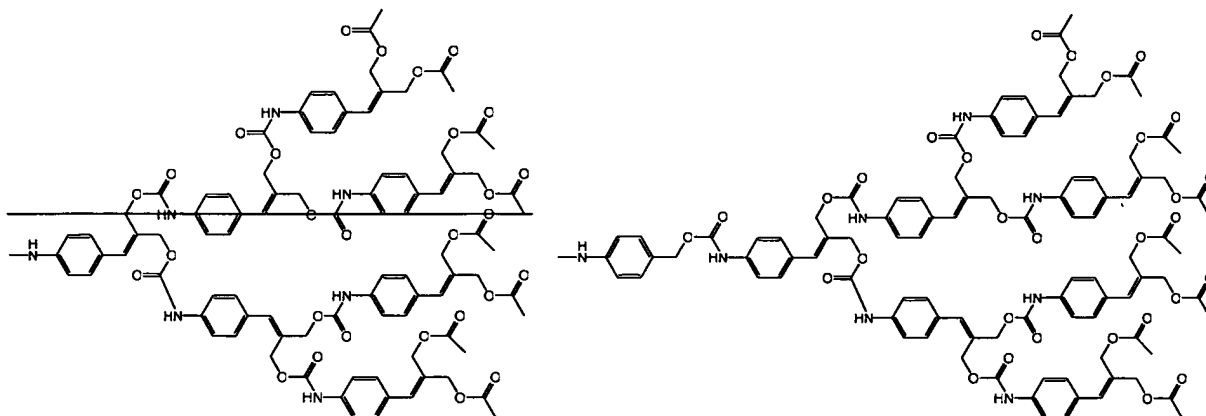
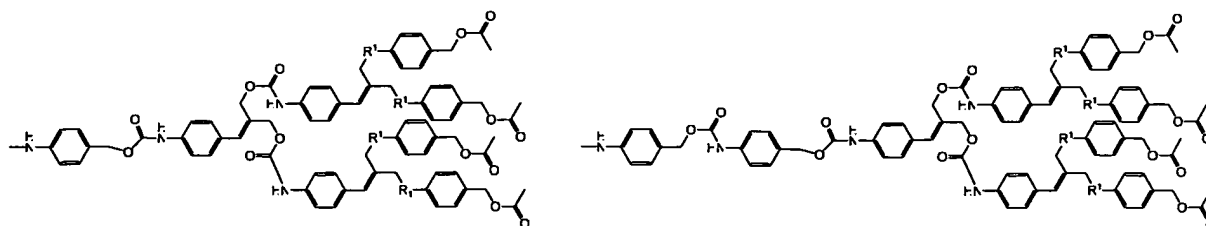
~~V-B, wherein B is part of C, W or X, is an oxidized form of B;~~

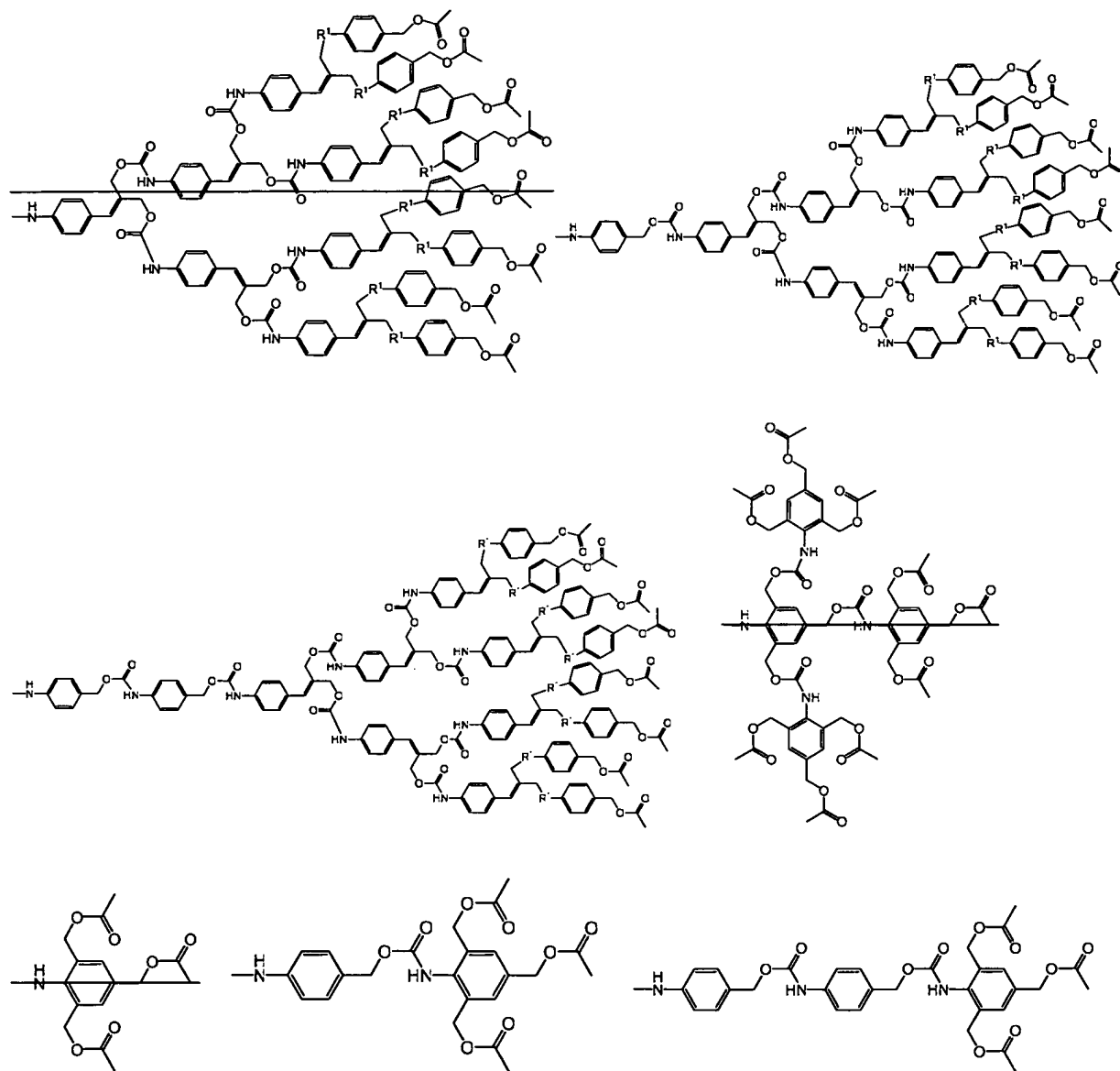


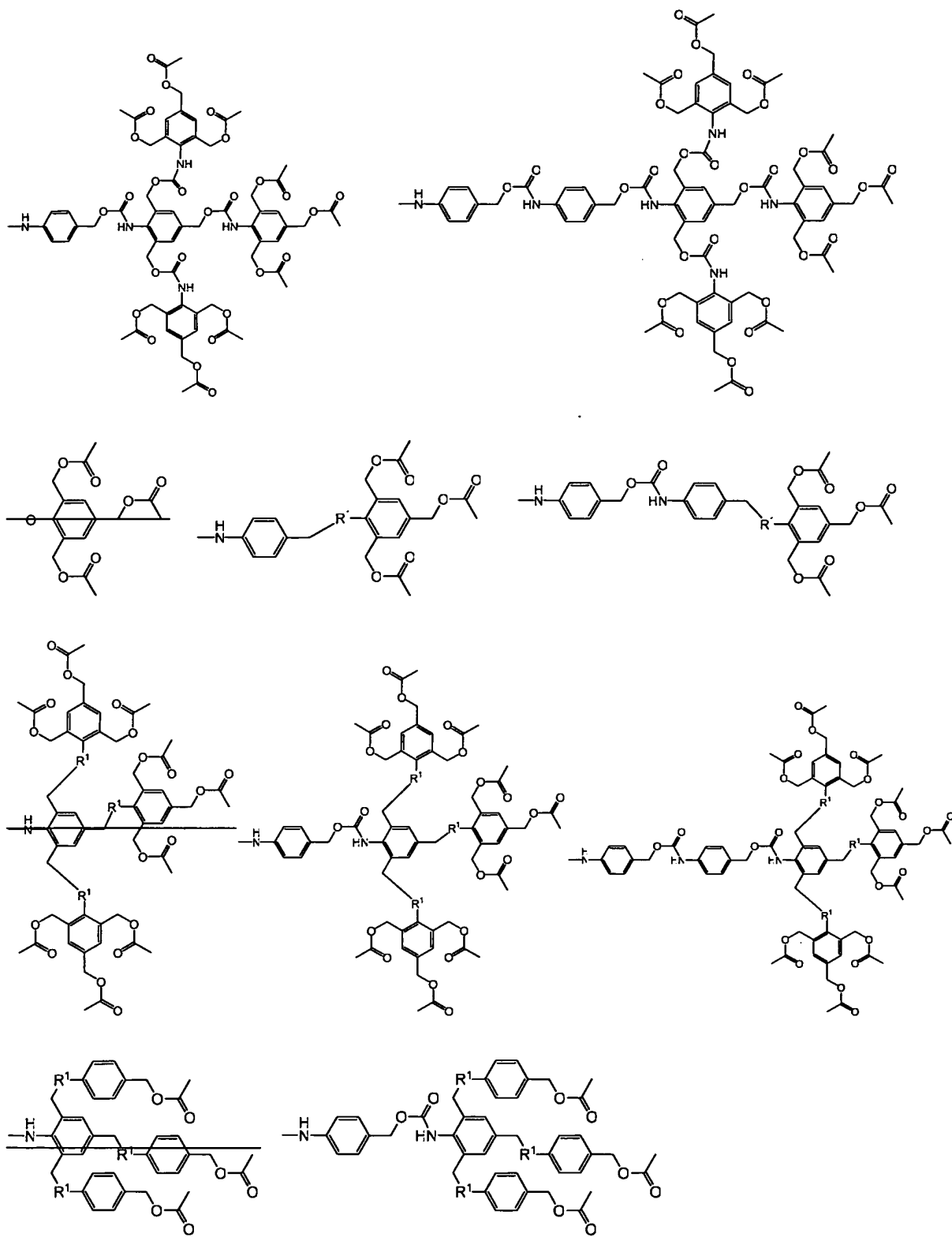
is selected from the group consisting of

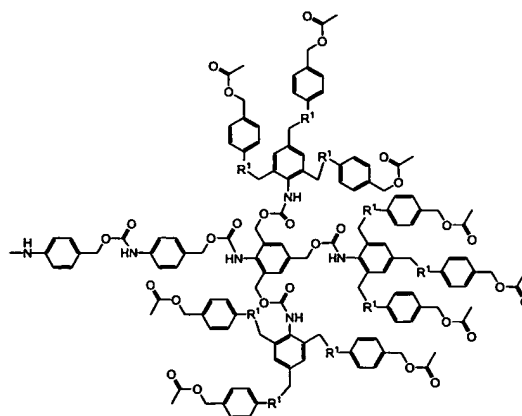
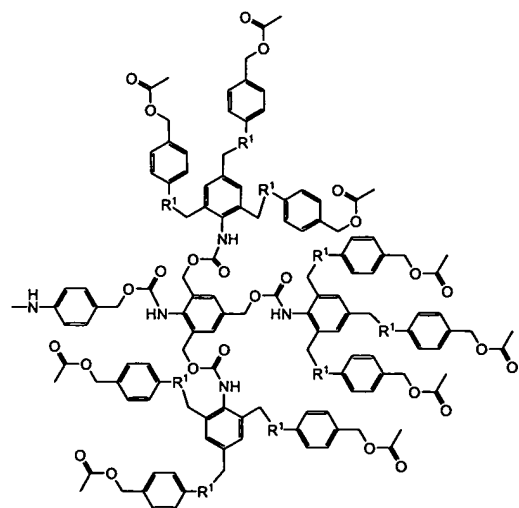
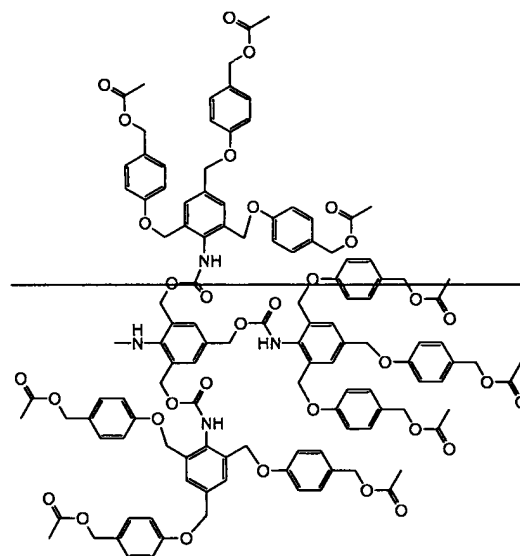
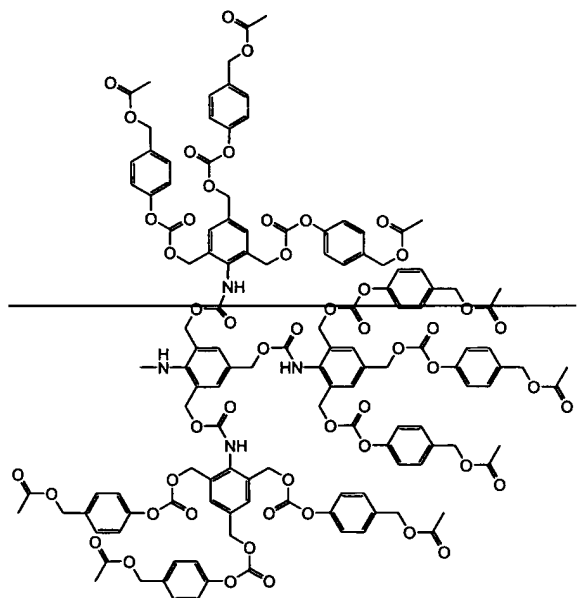
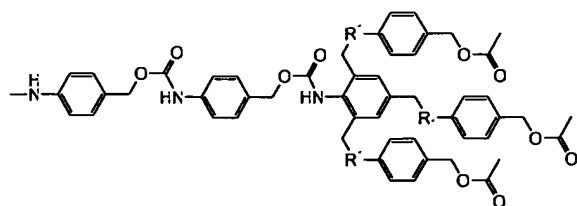


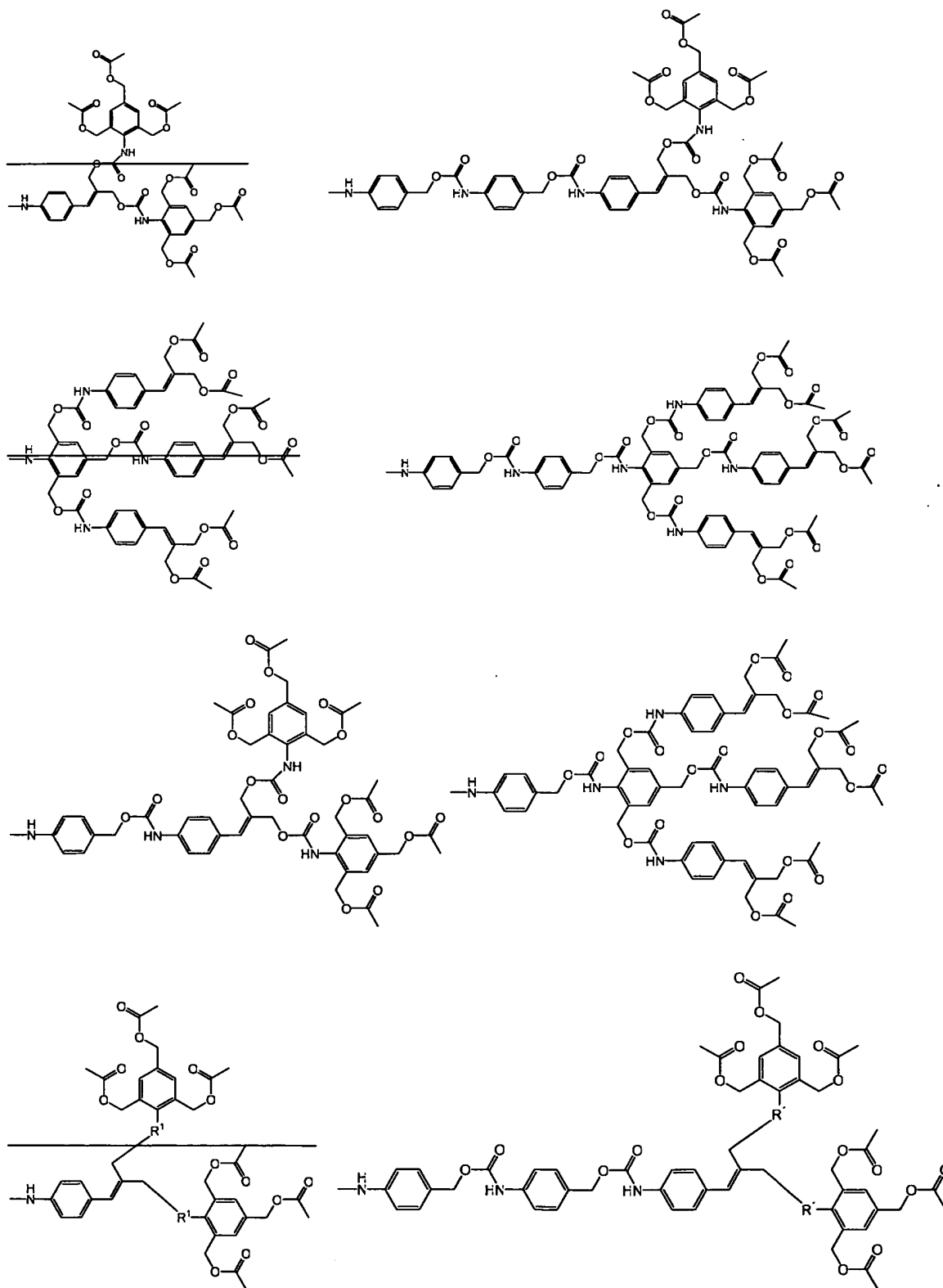


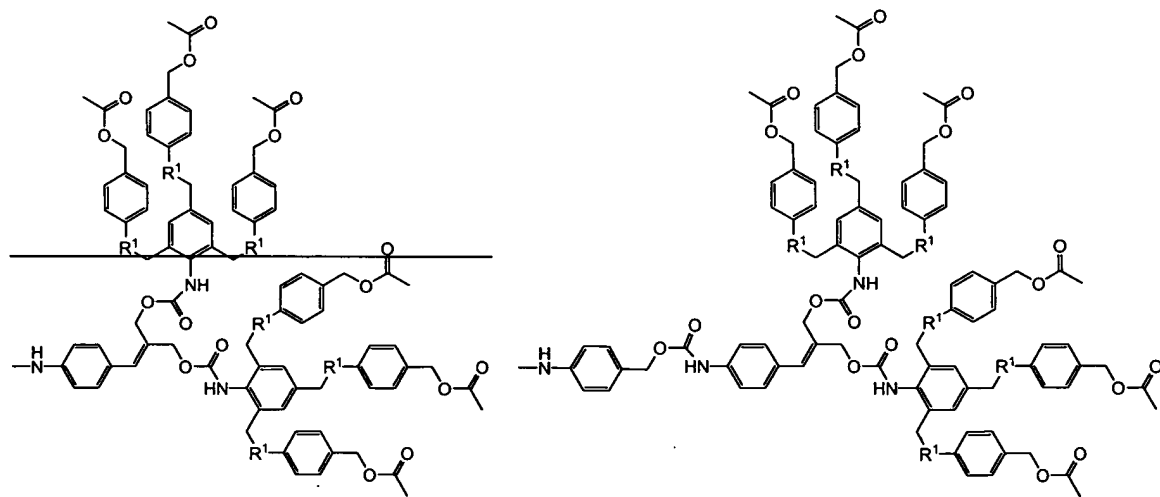
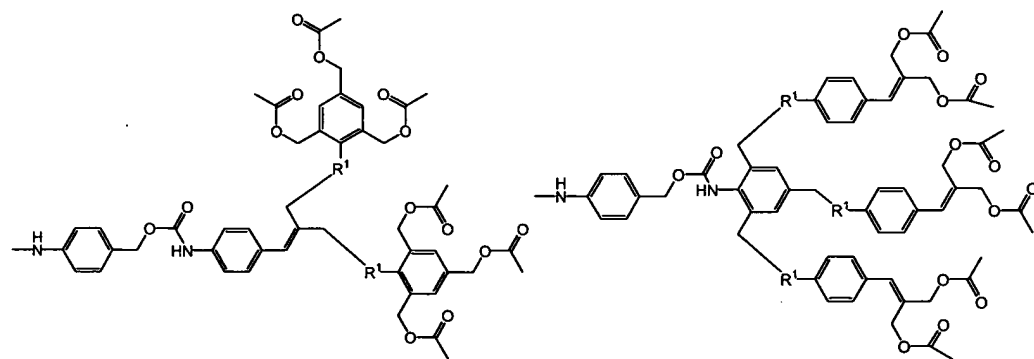
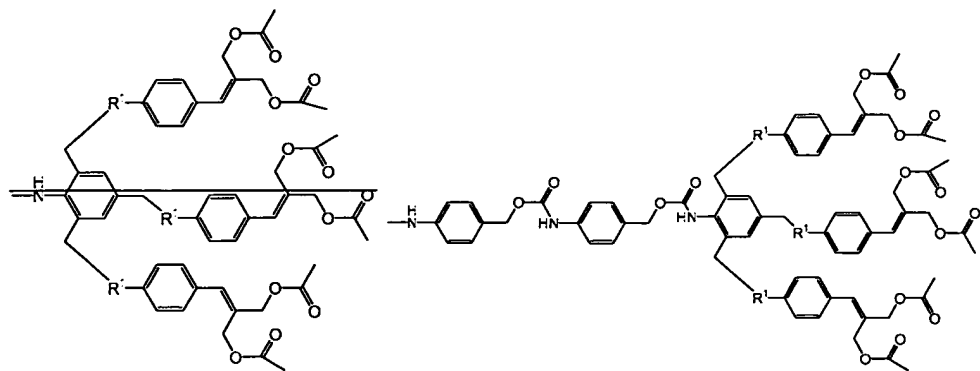


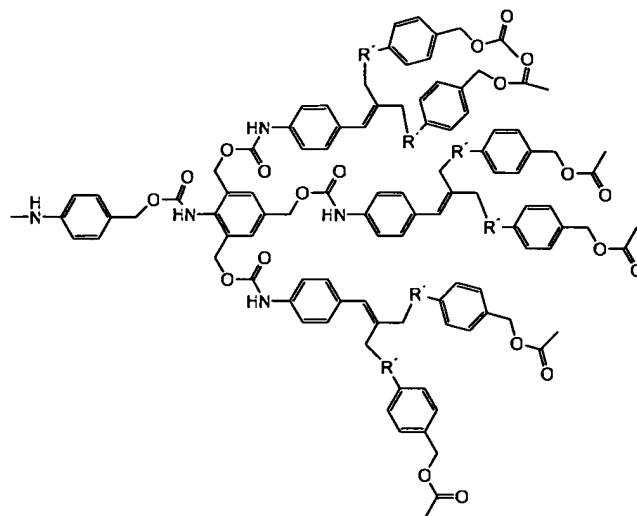
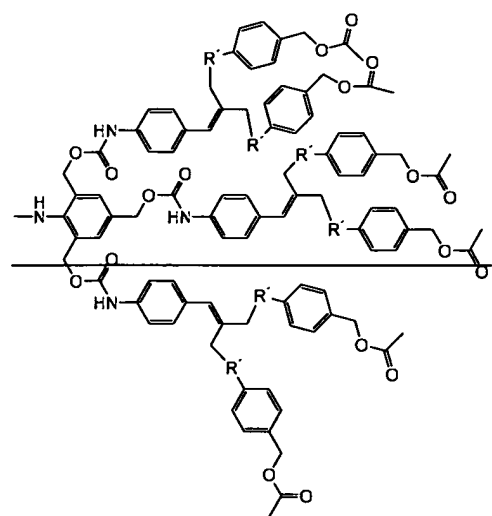
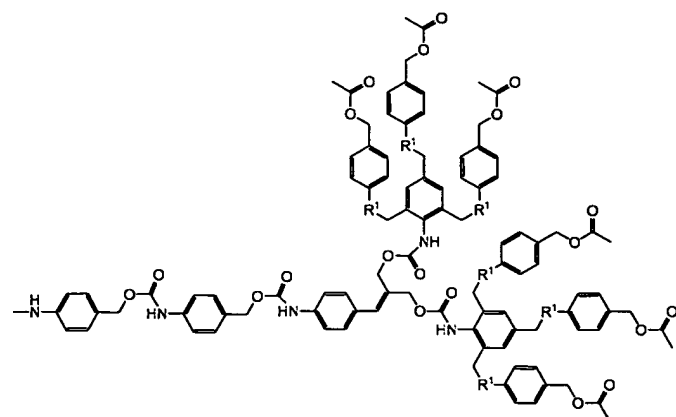




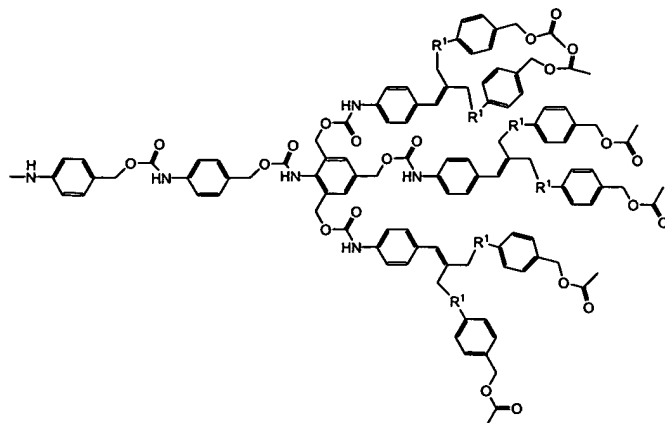








, and



; and

$R^1 = \text{H or } \text{OC(O)O}^-$; and

each Z is independently a therapeutic or diagnostic moiety; and

~~e, d, e, and f are independently an integer from 2 (included) to 24 (included).~~

15. (Withdrawn) The compound according to claim 14, the compound further comprising cyclization elimination spacers A.

16. (Previously presented) The compound according to claim 4, wherein the specifier V contains a substrate that can be cleaved by plasmin, one of the cathepsins, cathepsin B, β -glucuronidase, prostate-specific antigen (PSA), urokinase-type plasminogen activator (u-PA), a member of the family of matrix metalloproteinases, or wherein V-B is an oxidized form of B, or wherein V contains a nitro-(hetero)aromatic moiety that can be removed or transformed by reduction under hypoxic conditions or by reduction by a nitroreductase.

17. (Previously presented) The compound according to claim 4, wherein Z is selected from an antibiotic, an anti-inflammatory agent, an anti-viral agent, and an anticancer agent.

18. (Previously presented) The compound of claim 17, wherein Z is selected from

(hydroxyl containing cytotoxic compounds) etoposide, combrestatin, camptothecin, irinotecan (CPT-11), SN-38, topotecan, 9-aminocamptothecin, 9-nitrocamptothecin, 10-hydroxycamptothecin, GG211, lurtotecan, paclitaxel, docetaxel, esperamycin, 1,8-dihydroxy-bicyclo[7.3.1]trideca-4-ene-2,6-diyne-13-one, anguidine, doxorubicin, morpholine-doxorubicin, N-(5,5-diacetoxypentyl) doxorubicin, daunorubicin, epirubicin, idarubicin, mitoxantrone, vincristine, vinblastine, tallysomyacin, bleomycin, 4-bis(2-chloroethyl)aminophenol, 4-bis(2-fluoroethyl)aminophenol, and derivatives thereof,

(sulfhydryl containing compounds) esperamicin and 6-mercaptopurine, and derivatives thereof,

(carboxyl containing compounds) methotrexate, aminopterin, camptothecin (ring-opened form of the lactone), chlorambucil, melphalan, butyric acid and retinoic acid, and derivatives thereof, and

(aziridine amino containing or aromatic amino containing compounds) mitomycin C, mitomycin A, an anthracycline derivative containing an amine functionality with sufficient

leaving group ability, mitoxantrone, 9-amino camptothecin, methotrexate, aminopterin, tallysomycin, bleomycin, actinomycin, N,N-bis(2-chloroethyl)-p-phenylenediamine, N,N-bis(2-fluoroethyl)-p-phenylenediamine, deoxycytidine, cytosine arabinoside, gemcitabine, and derivatives thereof, and

(aliphatic amino containing compounds) daunorubicin, doxorubicin, epirubicin, idarubicin, N-(5,5-diacetoxypentyl)doxorubicin, an anthracycline, N⁸-acetyl spermidine, 1-(2-chloroethyl)-1,2-dimethanesulfonyl hydrazine, or derivatives thereof.

19. (Previously presented) The compound according to claim 18, wherein **Z** represents paclitaxel, docetaxel, or a derivative thereof, which is coupled to the self-eliminating multiple release spacer or spacer system via its 2'-hydroxyl group.

20. (Withdrawn) The compound according to claim 18, wherein **Z** represents camptothecin, irinotecan (CPT-11), SN-38, topotecan, 9-aminocamptothecin, 9-nitrocamptothecin, 10-hydroxycamptothecin, GG211, lurtotecan, or a derivative thereof, which is coupled to the self-eliminating multiple release spacer or spacer system via its 20-hydroxyl group.

21. (Withdrawn) The compound according to claim 18, wherein **Z** represents SN-38, topotecan, 10-hydroxycamptothecin, etoposide, 4-bis(2-chloroethyl)aminophenol, 4-bis(2-fluoroethyl)aminophenol, or a derivative thereof, which is coupled to the self-eliminating multiple release spacer or spacer system via its phenolic hydroxyl group.

22. (Withdrawn) The compound according to claim 18, wherein **Z** represents 9-aminocamptothecin, N,N-bis(2-chloroethyl)-p-phenylenediamine, N,N-bis(2-fluoroethyl)-p-phenylenediamine, or a derivative thereof, which is coupled to the self-eliminating multiple release spacer or spacer system via its aromatic primary amine group.

23. (Withdrawn) The compound according to claim 18, wherein **Z** represents daunorubicin, doxorubicin, epirubicin, idarubicin, N-(5,5-diacetoxypentyl)doxorubicin, an anthracycline, N⁸-acetyl spermidine, 1-(2-chloroethyl)-1,2-dimethanesulfonyl hydrazine, or derivatives thereof, which is coupled to the self-eliminating multiple release spacer or spacer system via its primary aliphatic amino group; wherein

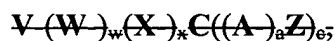
at least one multiple release spacer or spacer system of either generation **C**, **D** (if present), **E** (if present), or **F** (if present) is a phenol- or thiophenol-based multiple release spacer or spacer system, meaning that

i) **B** = O or S for at least one multiple release spacer in said generation, or

ii) when **B** = N for all multiple release spacers in said generation, at least one single release spacer is connected to at least two branches of at least one multiple release spacer in said generation, and **B** = O or S for at least two of said single release spacers.

24. (Withdrawn) The compound according to claim 23, wherein **B** = O or S for all multiple release spacers or spacer systems in said generation.

25. (Currently amended; withdrawn) The compound according to claim 23, wherein the phenol- or thiophenol-based multiple release spacers are connected to either **A** or **Z** or **S**, wherein **S** has no meaning or is H, OH, or a reactive moiety that allows for coupling the multiple release spacer system to leaving groups **Z** to afford compounds independently selected from:



26-30. (Canceled)

31. (Previously presented) The compound according to claim 4, wherein the specifier **V** is a tripeptide.

32. (Previously presented) The compound according to claim 31, wherein the tripeptide is linked via its C-terminus to the self-eliminating multiple release spacer or spacer system.

33. (Previously presented) The compound of claim 32, wherein the C-terminal amino acid residue of the tripeptide is selected from arginine and lysine, the middle amino acid residue of

the tripeptide is selected from alanine, valine, leucine, isoleucine, methionine, phenylalanine, cyclohexylglycine, tryptophan and proline, and the N-terminal amino acid residue of the tripeptide is selected from a D-amino acid residue and a protected L-amino acid residue including protected glycine.

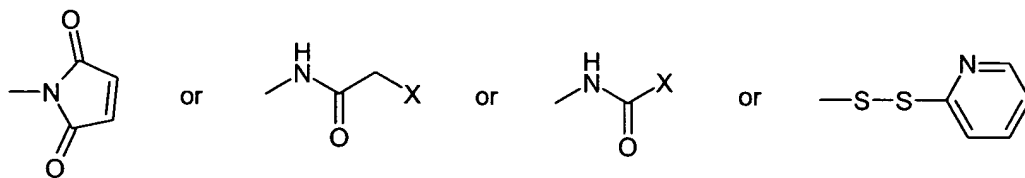
34. (Previously presented) The compound according to claim 33, wherein the specifier **V** is selected from D-alanylphenylalanyllysine, D-valylleucyllysine, D-alanylleucyllysine, D-valylphenylalanyllysine, D-valyltryptophanyllysine and D-alanyltryptophanyllysine.

35. (Currently amended; withdrawn) The compound according to claim ~~41~~, wherein the specifier **V** is an amino-terminal capped peptide covalently linked via the C-terminus to the self-eliminating multiple release spacer or spacer system.

36. (Withdrawn) The compound according to claim 35, wherein the specifier **V** is selected from benzyloxycarbonylphenylalanyllysine, benzyloxycarbonylvalyllysine, D-phenylalanylphenylalanyllysine, benzyloxycarbonylvalylcitrulline, tert-butyl oxycarbonylphenylalanyllysine, benzyloxycarbonylalanylarginylarginine, benzyloxycarbonylphenylalanyl-N-tosylarginine, 2-aminoethylthiosuccinimidopropionylvalinylcitrulline, 2-aminoethylthiosuccinimidopropionyllysylphenylalanyllysine, acetylphenylalanyllysine, and benzyloxycarbonylphenylalanyl-O-benzoylthreonine.

37. (Currently amended; withdrawn) The compound according to claim ~~41~~, wherein the specifier **V** comprises a reactive moiety that can be used to couple said compound to a targeting moiety.

38. (Withdrawn) The compound according to claim 37, wherein the reactive moiety is



wherein X is a leaving group.

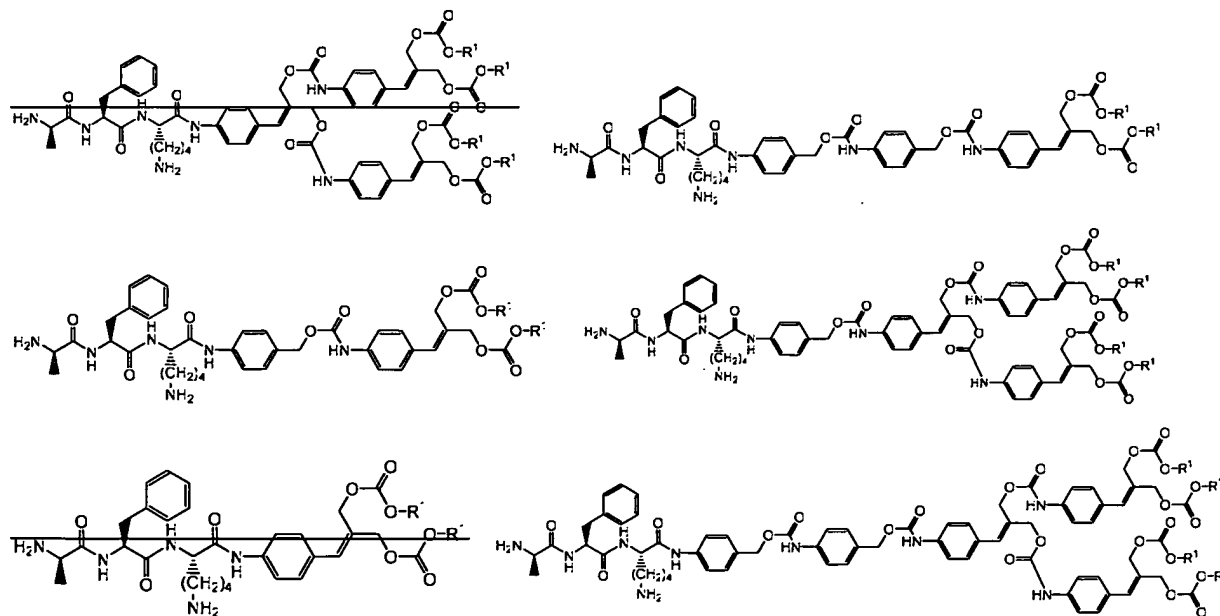
39. (Withdrawn) The compound according to claim 37, wherein the reactive moiety is selected from an *N*-hydroxysuccinimide ester, a *p*-nitrophenyl ester, a pentafluorophenyl ester, an isothiocyanate, an isocyanate, an anhydride, an acid chloride, a sulfonyl chloride, and an aldehyde.

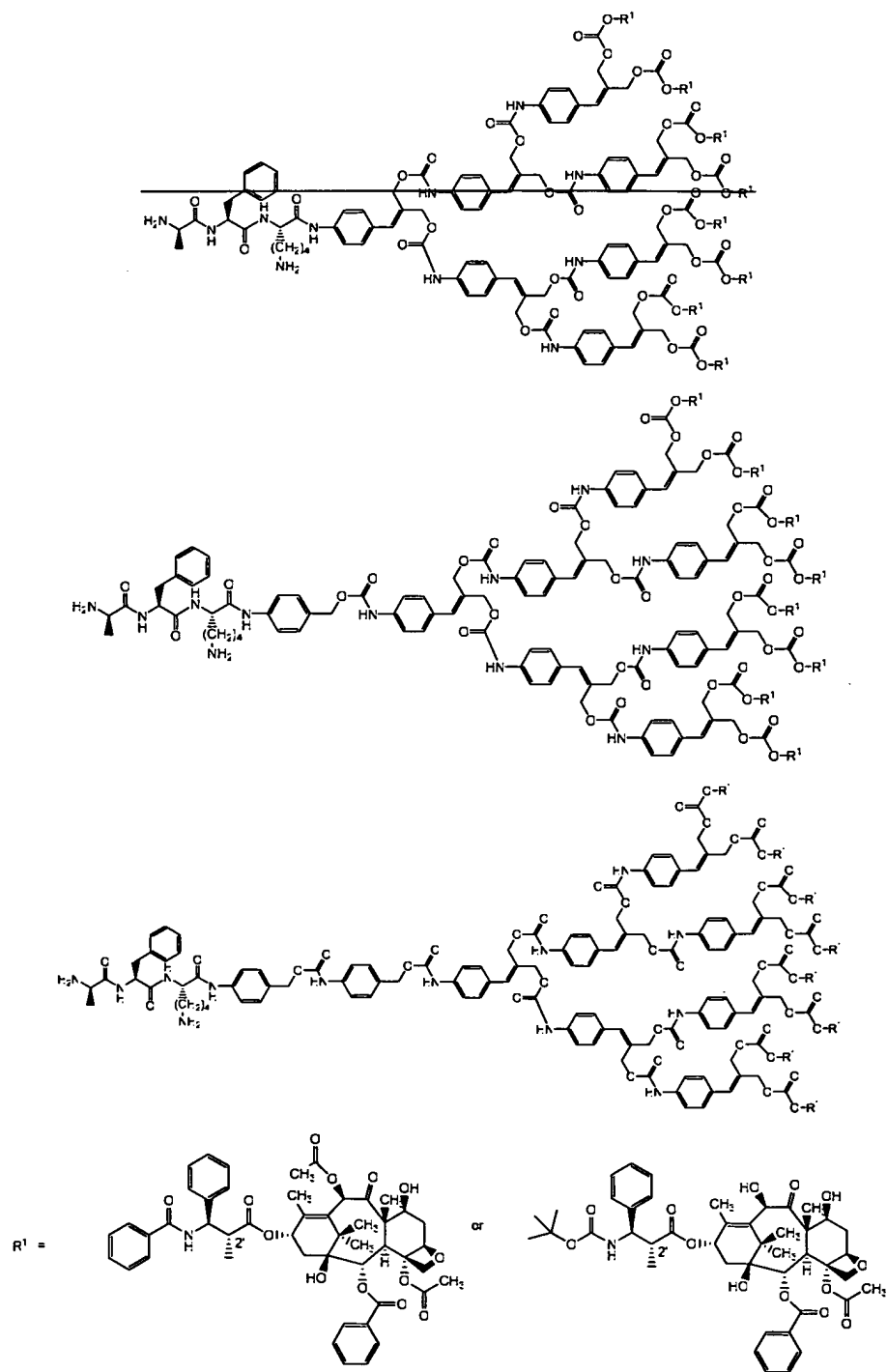
40. (Withdrawn) The compound according to claim 37, wherein the reactive moiety is a hydrazine group or an amino group.

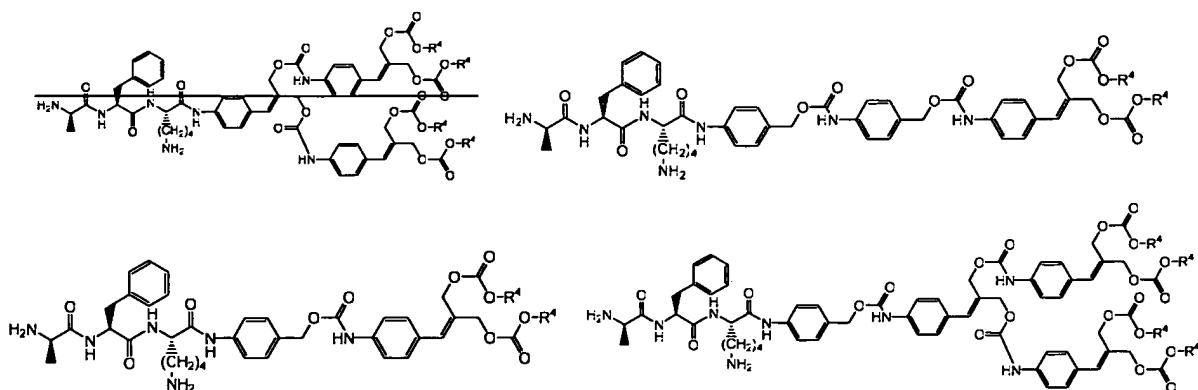
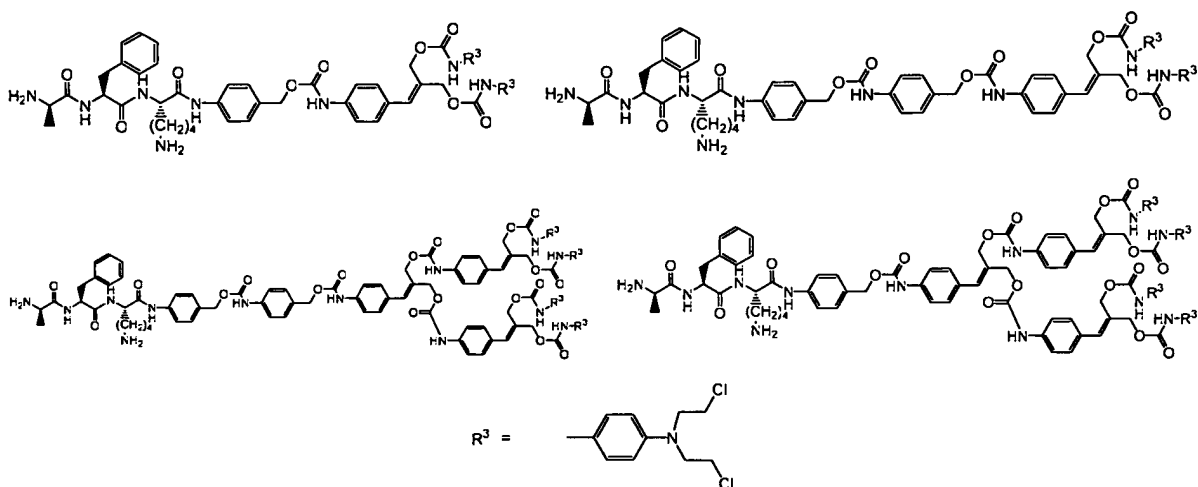
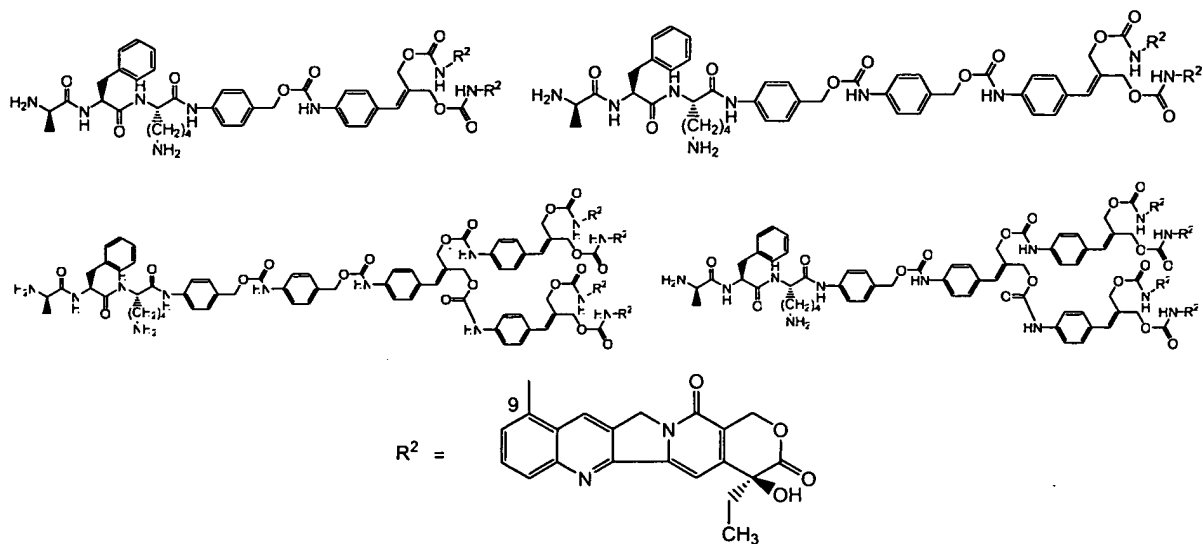
41. (Currently amended; withdrawn) The compound according to claim ~~41~~, wherein the specifier V comprises a targeting moiety.

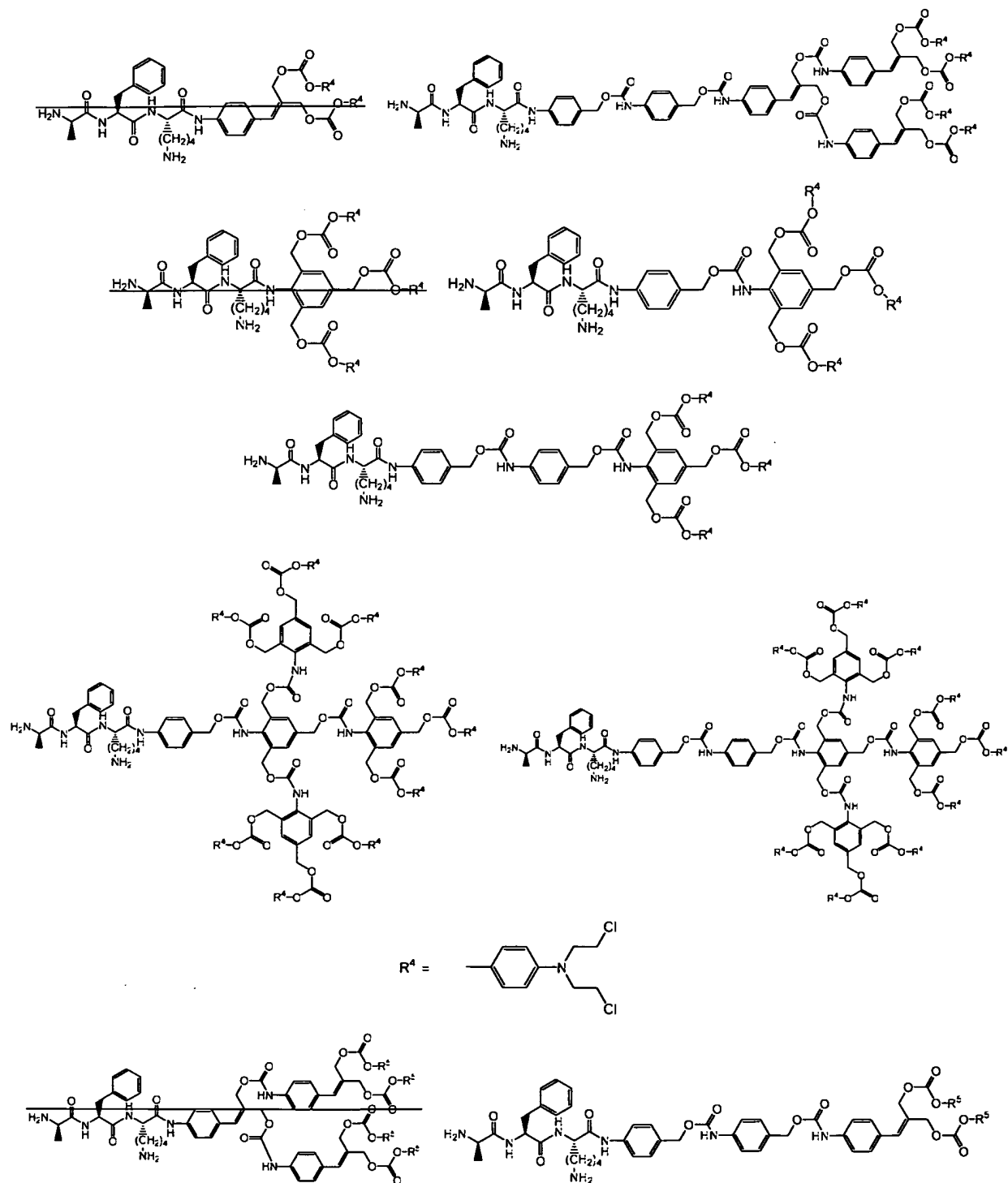
42. (Withdrawn) The compound according to claim 41, wherein the targeting moiety is selected from the group consisting of a protein or protein fragment, an antibody or an antibody fragment, a receptor-binding or peptide vector moiety and a polymeric or dendritic moiety.

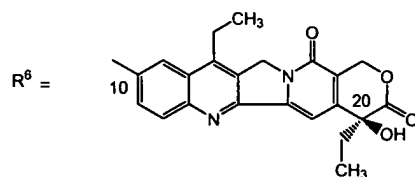
43. (Currently amended) A compound selected from the group consisting of

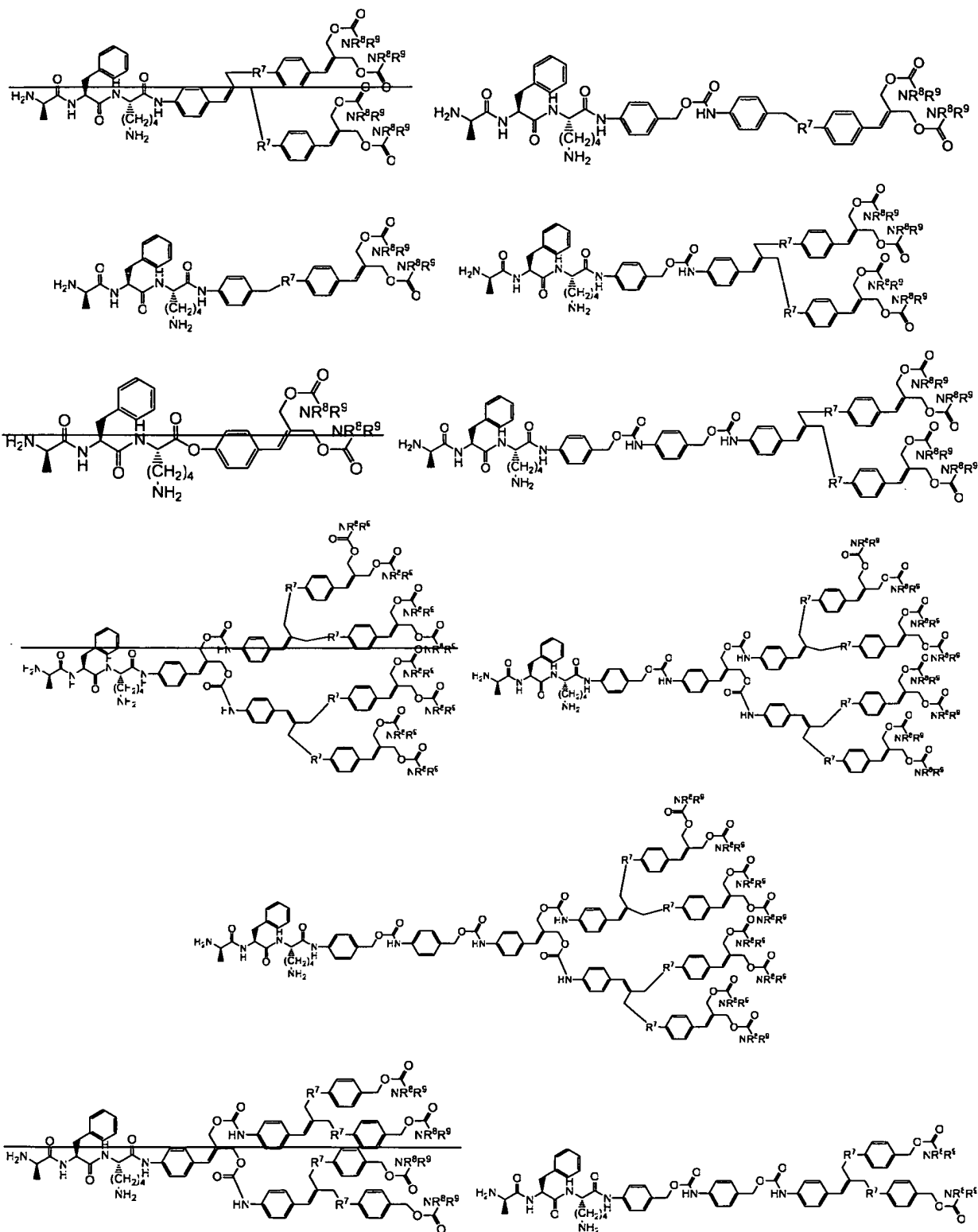


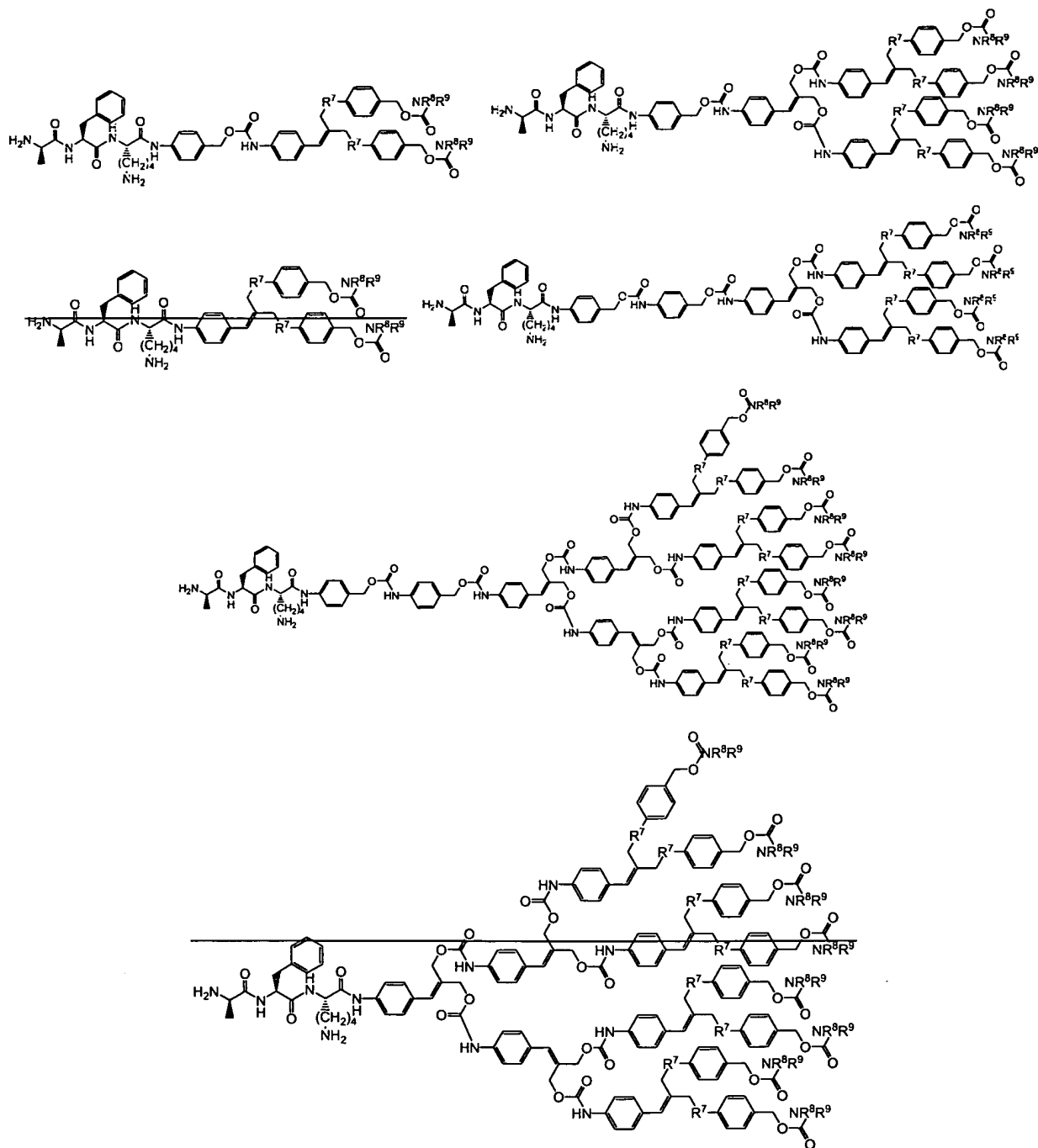


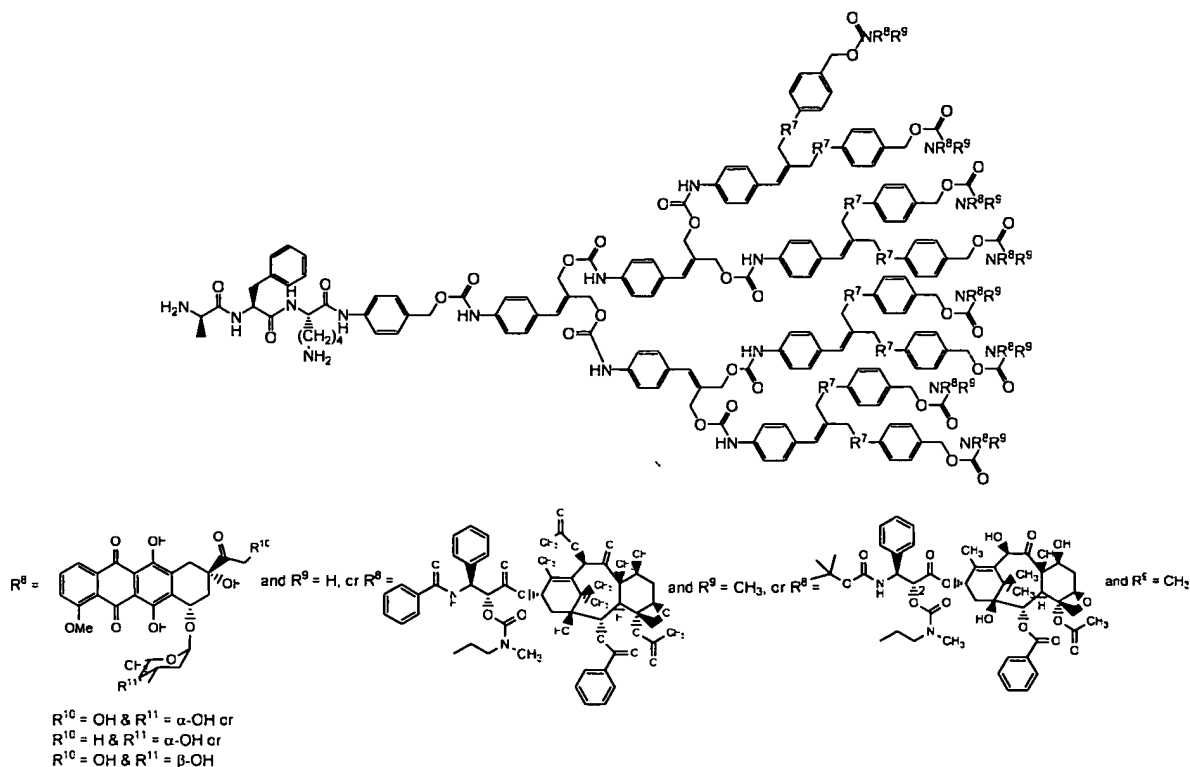












and salts thereof, wherein $R^7 = \text{OC(O)O}$.

44. (Canceled)

45. (Previously presented) A diagnostic assay process, the process comprising:
incubating a sample comprising an enzyme with a compound according to claim 4 to cause
enzymatic cleavage of the compound, and detecting one or more molecules liberated by the
enzymatic cleavage.

46. (Previously presented) The diagnostic assay process according to claim 45, wherein the
detection of the one or more molecules determines the presence or amount of the enzyme

47. (Previously presented) The diagnostic assay process according to claim 46, wherein the
detection of the one or more molecules determines the presence or amount of a protease.

48. (Previously presented) The diagnostic assay process according to claim 47, wherein the compound that is used comprises a substrate for said protease and one or more **Z** groups are detected.

49. (Previously presented) The diagnostic assay process according to claim 47, wherein the compound that is used comprises a substrate for the enzyme, which is the product of cleavage of its pro-enzyme precursor by said protease and one or more **Z** groups are detected.

50. (Currently amended; withdrawn) A composite structure comprising two or more compounds according to claim ~~41~~ connected with a polymeric structure.

51. (Previously presented) The compound according to claim 4, wherein the specifier **V** can be removed or transformed by an enzyme that is transported to the vicinity of or inside target cells or target tissue via ADEPT, PDEPT, MDEPT, VDEPT, or GDEPT.

52. (Canceled)

53. (Previously presented) A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound according to claim 4.

54. (Previously presented) A process for preparing a pharmaceutical composition comprising the step of mixing a compound according to claim 4 with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

55. (Canceled)